

A Drug-Free, Safe and Happy New Year

By Lisa-Michele Church, Executive Director
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With the New Year upon us, there will be occasions when we gather and celebrate with coworkers, neighbors, friends and family. Many times, such celebrations involve alcohol, which unfortunately can lead to alcohol-related crimes (i.e., drunk driving, public intoxication and fighting) if those consuming are not doing so responsibly.

As executive director of DHS, your health, safety and wellbeing are important to me. Thus, I encourage you to celebrate responsibly and remind you our department is a drug free workplace. As a drug free workplace, all employees are required to comply with DHRM Rule, R477-14-1(2), which states:

State employees may not unlawfully manufacture, dispense, possess, distribute or use any controlled substance or alcohol during working hours, on state property, or while operating a state vehicle at any time, or other vehicle while on duty except where legally permissible.

While all employees are required to comply with the above rule as a condition of employment, employees who are engaged in the performance of a federal grant are also required to notify the Executive Director in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction pursuant to DHRM Rule R477-14-2(9).

The abuse of alcohol, medications and illicit drugs is damaging to our health, adversely affects our efficiency at work, creates unsafe working conditions, and often destroys one's personal relationships. Further, drug abuse violations in the workplace can result in serious disciplinary action, including dismissal from employment.

This message is not to deter you from enjoying yourselves; rather, it is an expression of our concern for the well-being of all of our employees. I encourage you to enjoy the New Year with temperance, and remind you help is available through PEHP Life Assistance counseling should you or someone you know be struggling with addiction. If you have PEHP insurance, confidential and professional counseling is available free of charge. For more information about substance abuse treatment resources, call 2-1-1, contact PEHP/Life Assistance Counseling at 1-800-926-9619, or visit www.dsamh.utah.gov.

Have a safe and happy new year!